

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV IR (HELMAT, PARVIZ; MOTAMEDI, QASSEM)
SUBJ: TWO NEW GOI CABINET MEMBERS NAMED

REF ISFAHAN 018

1. PRIME MINISTER HOVEYDA ON FEB 26 INTRODUCED TWO NEW CABINET MEMBERS TO SHAH. NEW MINISTER FOR ENERGY IS PARVIZ HEKMAT WHO REPLACES IRAJ VAHIDI. NEW SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION MINISTER QASSEM MOTAMEDI HAS REPLACED ABDOL HOSSEIN SAM'I. THIS IS THE FIRST CABINET CHANGE SINCE HOVEYDA RESHUFFLED HIS CABINET FOUR MONTHS AGO.

2. PARVIZ HEKMAT, 42, HAS A MASTERS DEGREE IN ENGINEERING FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. IN 1962 HE JOINED THE PLAN AND BUDGET ORGANIZATION (PBO) AND HAS HELD VARIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING APPOINTMENT IN 1967 AS DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE COMMITTEE ON IRRIGATION AND DAM CONSTRUCTION. IN 1971 HE WAS PROMOTED TO DIRECTOR OF THAT OFFICE. HIS MOST RECENT POSITION, WHICH HE HAS HELD SINCE OCTOBER 1973, WAS UNDERSECRETARY FOR TECHNICAL AFFAIRS IN PBO. HE SPEAKS ENGLISH. FOLLOWING HIS AUDIENCE WITH THE SHAH, MEKMAT WAS REPORTED AS SAYING THAT THE SHAH ORDERED THE EXPANSION OF THE ELECTRIC POWER NETWORK WITHOUT DELAY.

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3. COMMENT: AS UNDERSECRETARY IN THE PBO, HEKMAT WAS ACCESSIBLE TO EMBASSY OFFICERS BUT NOT NOTABLY EFFECTIVE OR HELPFUL ON ONE MATTER FOR WHICH HE HAD RESPONSIBILITY; I.E., AFFIDAVITS REQUIRED OF FOREIGN FIRMS AND IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS. PERHAPS HEKMAT THOUGHT THIS WAS PERIPHERAL TO HIS DUTIES IN THE PBO AS CHIEF CONTACT NEGOTIATOR. ONE EMBASSY CONTACT FOUND HEKMAT TO BE A "HARD NEGOTIATOR". AN

IRANIAN CONTACT DESCRIBES HIM AS "WEAK."

4. DR. QASSEM MOTAMEDI, 52, HAS BEEN CHANCELLOR OF ISFAHAN UNIVERSITY SINCE 1967. HE IS THE SUBJECT OF A PREPARED INR BIOGRAPHIC NOTE DATED 1 MARCH 1976, REFERENCE NUMBER CR M 76-10690. FOR MORE RECENT COMMENT ON HIS ACTIVITIES WHILE CHANCELLOR AT ISFAHAN UNIVERSITY SEE REFTEL.

5. EMBOFFS HAVE FOUND MOTAMEDI TO BE VERY FORTHCOMING AND CORDIAL WITH REGARD TO THE AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM AT ISFHAN. HE IS KNOWN TO BE POLITICALLY AMBITIOUS AND HAD BEEN RUMORED FOR HIGHER GOVERNMENT POSITION DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS. HE HAS NOT IMPRESSED CONTACTS AS PARTICULARLY CREATIVE OR INTELLECTUALLY BRILLANT BUT WAS AN INFLUENTIAL FIGURE WITHIN THE GROUP OF UNIVERSITY CHANCELLORS. OTHER CHANCELLORS REGARD HIM AS AN ABLE ADMINISTRATOR. ONE AREA OF POSSIBLE CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS MINISTER WILL BE FUTURE RELATIONS BETWEEN THOSE CHANCELLORS AND THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION. THERE HAS BEEN A TRADITIONAL STRUGGLE IN IRAN FOR AUTONOMY BY UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS WHICH WAS IN CONFLICT WITH DESIRES OF FORMER MINISTER SAMI'I. CHANGE OF MINISTERS AT THIS TIME COMES AS SOMETHING OF A SURPRISE SINCE MINISTERS ARE IN PROCESS OF DEFENDING THEIR BUDGETS BEFORE PARLIAMENT. THIS TASK WILL BE NOW TAKEN OVER BY THE DEPUTIES IN THESE TWO MINISTRIES.
MIKLOS

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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